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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: PRT-WASIT: NOMINAL SUPPORT FOR US RECONSTRUCTION
EFFORTS IN WASIT PC

Classified By: PRT Team Leader Wade Weems for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

[1](#)1. (U) This is a PRT Wasit cable.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Summary: On 15 April outgoing PRT Team Leader Wade Weems introduced incoming TL Robert Kagler and briefed the Wasit Provincial Council on USG humanitarian and reconstruction activity between April 2003 and January 2007. The majority of the PC members who contributed to the animated discussion during and after the presentation pressed for specific projects, advocated their respective outlook on reconstruction and/or made political proclamations. While the details of USG/CF support to Wasit were not absorbed by the audience during the presentation, a briefing book was distributed to each PC member itemizing the \$364,000,000 disbursed from 2003 - 2006 and the \$38,000,000 disbursed in [1](#)2007. Separately, in the PC's leadership elections the PC Chair was re-elected while all three deputies were replaced. End summary.

[1](#)3. (C) Contributing to the PC brief were CDR 214 Fires Brigade (FB) and PRT USAID Representative. About ten minutes into Weems's presentation, PC members began their questions and statements, mainly regarding the status of individual projects and perceived disparities between the Provincial Reconstruction and Development Committee's work and the data provided in the briefing book. Although one PC member, Independent Hadi Na'amaa Ali al Yasiri, voiced his appreciation for CF support, most members were more intent on pontificating for the audience (including press) on their respective personal views about the needs of the province. After about 30 minutes of exchanges of positions between presenters and audience members, animated discussions broke out in the chambers, effectively precluding a structured briefing. Weems and CDR 214 communicated to the wider Wasit audience after the session via individual interviews with no fewer than five local print, TV, and radio outlets.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Although it is unlikely that the PC members absorbed the preponderance of CF support to Wasit, each PC member received a briefing book covering the details of USG reconstruction assistance. Compiled by PRT and 214th FB, the data demonstrates that USG/CF obligated and disbursed more than \$364,000,000 between 2003 and 2006, on security, electricity, water, health, and education infrastructure projects emphasizing the restoration of essential services to the population. Since 2007, the USG/CF has obligated over \$38,000,000 in projects, with the emphasis transitioning to economic development and capacity-building projects designed to increase the self-governing capability of Iraqi institutions.

[1](#)5. (S/NF) In a 16 April meeting with PDO, Juma Al-Saeidi, of al-Kut TV and Radio remarked that the ingratitude of PC members at the PRT's PC brief made him "sick to his stomach." Juma, who covered the brief and conducted interviews for al Kut TV/Radio, surmised the reason PC members were critical of the PRT's efforts was because, with the media present and

provincial elections on the horizon, PC members were attempting to display their fiduciary acumen and demands for "transparency" to potential voters.

¶6. (SBU) In separate PC news, on 12 April, in the quarterly elections for Provincial Council leadership: PC Chair Mohammad Hassan Jabber was re-elected; Siraj Anwar replaced Ahmed Hussayn Ebrah as first deputy; Hasmim Rahum Hussayn replaced Nizar Kathim as second deputy; and Khalid Hussayn replaced Saad Sharhan Ferhan as third deputy.

¶7. (C) Comment. The Provincial Council (PC) is dominated (31 of 41) seats) by an Islamic coalition comprised of ISCI/Badr Corps, Da'wa and religious independents elected on the Sistani-backed "List 221." A wide range of sources report that the Wasit populace believe that the PC, the Governor and local governments are corrupt, Iranian-influenced, and do not meet their responsibility to provide public services. Religious parties arguably stand to lose seats in the next election as voters in this personality-driven society turn to independent candidates who are known to them personally or by reputation. The reaction to the presentation thus may be an attempt by some PC members to score political points by sparring with the occupiers and diverting attention from their own deficiencies. End Comment.
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